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Information and communication technologies for development

Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/130.

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Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/130, including the recommendations of the ninth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development

Summary

The present report is prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and is being submitted to the General Assembly at the sixty-first session pursuant to its resolution 50/130 of 20 December 1995.

The text presents the engagement of United Nations organizations in the implementation of communication for development and inter-agency collaborative mechanisms for effective and integrated follow-up of related actions. Nine United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes contributed to the review of the existing coordination arrangements following discussions at the ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Rome, 6 to 9 September 2004). The Round Table incorporated the experience and views of bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia and experts.

The Round Table reiterated that communication for development is critical to the success of the Millennium Development Goals and acknowledged the vital role of the independent and pluralistic media in that process.

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I. Ninth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (Rome, 6-9 September 2004)

1. The ninth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development focused on three specific thematic areas: communication for natural resource management; communication for isolated and marginalized groups; and communication in research, extension and education.

2. Today, the importance of communication in development is acknowledged. It has moved from a focus on information dissemination to one on community participation. Many national and international initiatives acknowledge that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without good communication and recognize that new strategies and tools must be developed.

3. There have been many global changes since the eighth Round Table, and the ninth Round Table began by looking at the many challenges faced by the world today. These include the rapid spread of globalization and the spread of information and communications technologies (ICTs); the increasing divide between rich and poor; the changing nature of the nation-state; the changing nature of the private sector; ecological pressure; the decentralization of services; the explosion of media; and the emergence of new social actors.

4. The ninth Round Table noted a number of principles shared and agreed on by all participants. These all start from the belief that communication for sustainable development is about people, who are the drivers of their own development. Further, communication for development is a horizontal, two-way process that is about people coming together to identify problems, agree on visions for desirable futures, and empower the poorest. It is about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge. It respects the local context, values and culture.

5. A number of new initiatives on communication for sustainable development were presented and noted, including the proposed 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development. The Round Table established the basis for a working group/network to foster global partnerships on communication for development and established a Plan of Action to be facilitated and monitored through the mechanism of the working group.

6. The Round Table came up with a series of recommendations and a Declaration, which are presented below (see chap. XII).

II. Communication for development in the current context

7. Wide-ranging initiatives and partnerships, including the diffusion of ICTs, have contributed to advancing communication for development. In this connection, State expenditures are increasing for ICT deployment to underserved areas in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, and development cooperation is contributing to public access of online information on education, training, agriculture, and health care.

8. New opportunities in the effective use of information and communication technologies have led to international discussions about digital and information gaps and the related social and economic differences between industrial and developing nations and within countries. The Action Plan adopted by the World Summit on the

Information Society and the facilitating role assigned to different United Nations organizations may strengthen linkages between communication for development and the use of ICTs.

9. The World Electronic Media Forum II, organized within the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (November 2005, Tunis), emphasized the importance of the media in the information society particularly in promoting the use of traditional and new media to foster universal access to information, culture and knowledge for all people, especially vulnerable populations and populations in developing countries and using, inter alia, radio and television as educational and learning tools. The Forum reiterated the necessity of an independent, pluralistic and diverse media; freedom of information; use and treatment of information in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards; the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.

10. As community media centres expand their networks in the innovative use of old and new communication technologies, there is also growing demand for the media's function in producing, gathering, checking and distributing diverse news and content. Equally, it is essential to ensure that enabling legal and regulatory frameworks are in place to encourage community media and to guarantee the independence and pluralism of the media.

11. The organizations of the United Nations system are active in providing policy advice on the formulation and implementation of national communication and e-strategies, regulatory reform, institutional development and on programmes and projects to improve connectivity, capacity and local content development.

12. Despite the interactive potential of new media technologies, dominant configurations tend to follow a broadcast model of one to many. Interactivity is rarely explored innovatively and two-way flows of information are rarely promoted.

13. Access to information via new technologies does not necessarily assume effective use, and delivery of information alone does not mean that people are informed in any meaningful way. Information needs to be transformed into knowledge in the local context and in local languages.

14. Integration of information and communication technologies into communities and people's engagement with those technologies require the development of a new media literacy if the objective is to provide not only access, but also the ability to analyse, critically evaluate, and use ICTs and the information and knowledge it can carry, along with the ability to create content.

15. These efforts and related policy advice need to be more effectively integrated, however, into the broader development agenda using the Millennium Development Goals as a solid foundation for moving towards a more cohesive approach to development and poverty eradication particularly within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

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III. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

16. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) joins those organizations that highlight support for a free and independent media as the cornerstone for successful poverty eradication as well as for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The recognition and protection of human rights forms the core of the United Nations system and as such, UNESCO bases its activities within a human rights framework.

17. The main orientations of the UNESCO communication for development policy in the last biennium have been in line with the following strategic objectives: (i) promoting the free flow of ideas and universal access to information; (ii) promoting the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and world information networks; and (iii) access for all to information and communication technologies, especially in the public domain.

Supporting development of communication media

18. The UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication strengthens communication media in developing countries by supporting the development of a free and pluralistic media, building investigative capacities through human resource development, and supporting the development of community radio to enhance people's voice and participation. In the period 2004-2006, the Programme supported 159 media projects in 80 developing countries.

19. Training of journalists, building the capacities of training institutions, training of trainers, development of training material, and training on specific subject matters are among the capacity-building areas to which UNESCO renders its support. The organization is currently working with partners to hold the first World Journalism Education Congress in 2007.

20. The role of editorially independent public service broadcasting as a gateway to information and knowledge was also promoted during the biennium, in cooperation with major broadcasting unions.

21. As a continued follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, strengthening the capacities of communication professionals to produce and disseminate development messages on the Millennium Development Goals and related issues has been a key focus.

Fostering actions to reduce the digital divide and promote social inclusion

22. After the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, UNESCO implemented relevant sections of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Action Plan[1] and positioned itself as a key organization in preparation for the second phase (Tunis, 2005). The consistency of the UNESCO key message "towards knowledge societies" with its four underlying principles — freedom of expression,

[1] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.

universal access to information and knowledge, promotion of cultural diversity and equal access to quality education — helped to transform the focus of the technologies debate to its utility for knowledge creation and sharing. The second phase of the World Summit increased the role of UNESCO as a key partner and facilitator in 8 out of 11 World Summit action lines, either solely or jointly with other United Nations system agencies, mainly the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

23. Within its unique mandate to promote the "free flow of ideas by word and image", UNESCO is committed to follow up the World Summit Action Line C9 on the media and to promote and integrate communication for development in the follow-up action.

24. The introduction of community multimedia centres as a model for effective community access and use of information has been widely acknowledged and taken up by United Nations system agencies and other partnerships.

25. Over 50 pilot community multimedia centres were created and supported in 15 countries and scaling up of the centres was initiated in three African countries (Mali, Mozambique and Senegal) as a test bed for wider provision of access to ICTs in marginalized communities.

26. ICT-based distance learning was enhanced through partnerships established with Microsoft and Intel for teacher training; collaboration in support of scientific information established with Alcatel, World Space and IBM for the benefit of scientific research institutions for example in South-East Europe. The cooperation agreement with Microsoft has resulted in (i) the establishment of a fully operational Regional ICT Resource Centre for Youth in Tunisia; and (ii) the setting up of an Internet-based global collaboration space for "Communities of Practice", known as UNESCO Knowledge Communities. Microsoft and Intel are also contributing to a multipartner project to develop a UNESCO universal teacher training ICT syllabus.

Promoting the expression of cultural and linguistic diversity through communication and information

27. Based on the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, actions involved (a) sensitization of decision makers to encourage diversified content in media and global information networks; (b) training of communication and information professionals to produce quality content; and (c) supporting innovative local content productions and their dissemination at the international level.

28. Quality content production is promoted utilizing both traditional and new media and through these means international public access to local content and endogenous programmes is increased enhancing the flow of intercultural information from South to South and from South to North.

Promoting freedom of expression and the independence and pluralism of media

29. A correlation between freedom of expression and the eradication of poverty was the main theme of World Press Freedom Day 2006, which emphasized that (a) media freedom and access to information play a key role in facilitating local participation and empowerment of the poor; and (b) freedom of expression is the core human right in a rights-based approach to poverty reduction serving to trigger and catalyse the realization of all other basic human rights.

30. The political right to freedom of expression and the social right to poverty alleviation are both fundamental rights. The work of UNESCO in linking free press, access to information and poverty alleviation is a vital contribution to discussions on development.

31. The celebration of World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and the award of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize are prominent in raising public awareness of press freedom as a fundamental right and in giving high visibility to the efforts of UNESCO in this respect.

32. The comprehensive strategy developed with partner organizations to secure a holistic and coherent approach to media assistance in conflict and post-conflict areas has been put into practice in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda and Palestine.

33. UNESCO accords importance to the application of specific standards such as public service broadcasting, people's democratic participation in the media, media pluralism, and the establishment of related legal regulatory frameworks in the reconstruction phase.

34. The UNESCO approach to communication for development is holistic and encompasses capacity-building and policy advocacy at national levels, as well as functioning as a laboratory of ideas at the international level.

IV. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Follow-up on joint actions proposed at the ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development

35. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the World Bank and the online network, The Communication Initiative (www.comminit.com), is co-organizing the First World Congress on Communication for Development, to be held in Rome at FAO headquarters, from 25 to 27 October 2006.

36. The main objective of the Congress is to demonstrate that communication for development is essential for meeting today's most pressing development challenges and, as such, should be fully integrated in development policy and practice. It will also promote mainstreaming of communication into national plans and policies, partnerships with United Nations system agencies and other donor organizations.

37. FAO is responsible for the stream on "Communication for Sustainable Development", which will be structured around three communication themes: (a) communication for food security, rural development and livelihoods strategies; (b) communication for natural resources management and the environment, and (c) communication for poverty reduction and equity issues.

38. A fourth theme on "regional perspectives" will provide the results of seven regional studies and consultations in a compendium entitled "Regional perspectives in communication for development", which presents the views and proposals of local practitioners and institutions for mainstreaming communication for development into sustainable development policies.

Capacity-building and collaboration with bilateral partners

39. In 2004, FAO and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), through a joint workshop on effective communication between research, extension and farmers, identified and analysed communication gaps and developed appropriate communication strategies to engage experts in a dialogue on communication between national and international research, extension services and their clientele.

Field support to development programmes and projects

40. The FAO approach to communication for development is mainly implemented through field programmes, which provide technical advice and assistance to member countries on (a) communication strategy design; (b) formulation of national communication policies and systems; and (c) training and field workshops in communication skills, methodologies and media, and particularly in support of the Special Programme for Food Security, and of natural resource management, ICTs for development and other FAO priority programmes.

41. Field experiences are documented as case studies, publications, and lessons learned in communication approaches and tools.

"Bridging the Rural Digital Divide", or ICTs for rural development

42. The application of new ICTs such as the Internet and mobile telephones has become a crucial force in world economic and social development and can significantly assist countries in addressing major obstacles in agriculture and rural development.

43. The FAO global programme, entitled "Bridging the rural digital divide", contributed to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and demonstrated the application of participatory communication approaches alongside convergence of new information and communication technologies with traditional media such as rural radio.

44. Special attention has been given to the application of ICTs in research and extension networks, improvement of advisory services, as well as participatory processes of involving local communities in the development policies.

45. The benefits of ICTs have been harnessed to create "Communities of Practices" in agriculture and rural development using different approaches such as virtual extension and research communication networks, farm radio networks and rural communication networks in Bhutan, Costa Rica, Egypt, Namibia and Uganda.

46. Local appropriation and ownership of new communication tools by rural peoples has strengthened a series of communication centres and networks and resulted in the publication of methodological frameworks, distance learning tools (Information Management Resource Kit) and guidelines.

47. FAO works on ICTs for rural development in collaboration with other agencies such as the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation, the International Institute for Communication for Development and the Global Knowledge Partnership.

Natural resource management, indigenous people and HIV/AIDS

48. In Cambodia and Bolivia, FAO support to communication for natural resource management and indigenous peoples has led to the creation of virtual communities and the publication of various resource books.

49. Participatory rural communication approaches have been applied in Uganda in relation to the prevention of HIV and AIDS through livelihoods communication projects to ensure that those affected by HIV/AIDS were at the centre of communication activities and processes.

50. In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), an HIV/AIDS sensitization and behavioural change communication project is being implemented in five provinces of Cameroon.

Rural radio

51. Training of rural radio broadcasters in four African countries and a workshop on the concept of rural radio for decision makers in Southern and Eastern Africa have contributed to the capacity of rural radio broadcasters in Africa.

52. Partnership with non-governmental organizations such as the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters has enabled the production, adaptation, and distribution of fact sheets on seeds production, market prices, post-harvest management and animal production to the rural radio network members of the Association's Simbani News Agency in Africa.

Policies and strategies

53. FAO has been supporting the countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union in drafting a strategy to extend legal texts on phytosanitarian, zoo

sanitarian, and food safety measures. The National Communication Policy of Mali has been updated and a national communication policy for Senegal has been drafted. Environmental communication strategies are being processed in Mali and Burkina Faso.

Communication in emergencies

54. In response to the avian influenza epidemic in Asia and Africa, and locust outbreaks in Africa, the Near East and Southern Europe, FAO mobilized resources and provided technical support to communicate emergency information and programmes based on community-led and participatory approaches.

55. During the period 2003-2005, when 13 million hectares of land were treated with pesticides to combat an upsurge of the desert locust in 26 countries, FAO carried out preventive information and communication activities including safe use of pesticides and long-term environmental monitoring.

V. World Bank

56. The Development Communication Division of the World Bank has grown in number from a group of 5 professionals in 1998 to 20 in 2006, demonstrating the consideration gained for the discipline of communication for development within the World Bank.

57. The growing relevance of communication for development has been also reflected in the broadening role of World Bank concepts and practices that are fast adopting communication, not only as dissemination of information and diffusion of innovation, but also as a means to build trust, compare perceptions, assess political risks and define or validate the objectives of any intervention.

58. Mainstreaming communication for development in policies and operations is demonstrated by an overarching goal that introduces a communication-based assessment methodology during the initial assessment of development initiatives.

59. The term "communication-based" intends to emphasize that this assessment is not just about communication needs, but rather the use of communication to explore and investigate all relevant issues for the effective design of development projects and programmes.

60. Communication-based assessment (a) facilitates the exchange of perceptions and knowledge among relevant stakeholders; (b) assists in assessing any situation, minimizing political risks and the likelihood of conflicts; (c) builds consensus on key priorities; and (d) helps to define objectives that are well understood and agreed upon by stakeholders.

61. Based on the communication-based assessment methodology, the Development Communication Division presented the concept of the first World Congress on Communication for Development at the ninth Round Table as an initiative aimed at promoting the mainstreaming of communication for development in institutional policies.

62. The first World Congress on Communication for Development (a) invites direct interaction between United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, and policymakers to present and discuss the value added and challenges of communication for development at a local and global level; (b) intends to address the effectiveness of communication for development by recognizing the application of proven theoretical models and by linking academia with practitioners in the presence of decision makers; (c) will further promote mainstreaming of communication for development in the implementation of institutional policies on development.

63. Communication is given an increasingly important role in virtually all development initiatives, including those closely related to good governance and transparency.

64. The ultimate goal of development is to instil "change for the better" by involving people's participation, which by far is a challenging and complex process. This process demands (a) a systematic reflection of the theoretical and practical underpinnings of communication for development; and (b) knowledge of theoretical models as well as effective, practical experiences that can increase the value added of communication for development in meeting the challenges of human development.

VI. International Fund for Agricultural Development

65. The International Fund for Agricultural Development is the only international institution dedicated exclusively to eradicating poverty in rural areas of developing countries. Communication processes are increasingly recognized by IFAD as powerful tools to facilitate sustainable rural development and poverty eradication.

66. In particular, communication for development is fundamental to strengthening the capacity of rural poor people to lead their own development and overcome poverty.

67. Communication for development has supported and strengthened many IFAD-funded projects. The institution is now moving, however, towards a more systematic and strategic approach to using communication in addressing development challenges.

World Congress on Communication for Development

68. IFAD is a member of the Advisory Body to the World Congress on Communication for Development and will: (a) recommend appropriate policymakers and decision makers to participate in the Congress Policymaker's Forum; (b) provide input to the study on mainstreaming communication for development, which is being undertaken prior to the Congress; (c) advise on the post-Congress advocacy strategy and the mainstreaming agenda; and (d) contribute to following up on the recommendations coming out of the Congress, including the possible creation of a global alliance on communication for development.

69. IFAD is working with FAO to organize part of the thematic stream on communication and sustainable development, especially with regard to communication, food security, and rural development and livelihood strategies.

World Summit on the Information Society

70. IFAD participated in both phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, hosting side events at the Geneva and Tunis summits that focused on the role of ICTs in rural poverty eradication.

71. In Geneva in 2003, IFAD hosted a discussion on what ICTs, as a tool rather than as a solution, could do for the world's 800 million extremely poor people who live in rural areas.

72. During the Tunis summit in 2005, IFAD organized a panel discussion on the theme entitled "Eradicating rural poverty by connecting rural communities", to demonstrate the real-time lessons emerging from an IFAD initiative in the United Republic of Tanzania, the First Mile Project, and to discuss their implications regionally and globally. The panel discussion linked these lessons to key issues highlighted by the 2003 side event, including: (a) the importance of relevant local content; (b) how local people are using and adapting ICTs in innovative ways to their own circumstances and needs; (c) convergence and complementarities of traditional and new ICTs; and (d) the importance of an enabling policy and regulatory environment.

First Mile Project

73. The First Mile Project is linked to the Tanzanian Government Agricultural Marketing Systems Development Programme and is supported by the Government of Switzerland. The project aims to determine whether access to ICTs can help rural poor people communicate and negotiate with others along the market chain to build fairer and more efficient market relationships.

74. The IFAD Communications Division is using a multimedia approach to document the emerging lessons, results and impact of the First Mile Project. People involved in the project are being interviewed at different times during the life of the project and their evolving stories will help to illustrate impact.

Rural Knowledge Network in East Africa

75. Building on experiences with the Linking Local Learners platform and with Farmer Field Schools in Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, IFAD will partner with FAO to develop a rural knowledge network in East Africa. The main objective of the network is to initiate a people-centred knowledge management process that is built on an understanding of farmers' needs, shapes existing technical information to respond to their requirements and delivers knowledge in a form they can understand. The network will emphasize access to and control over information, so that the impact, relevance and accuracy of information are the results of a decentralized, participatory process. IFAD has worked with FAO on Farmer Field Schools in East Africa since 1998.

Framework for a rural communication programme in West and Central Africa

76. IFAD is developing a framework and action plan for a communication for development programme in West and Central Africa based on an analysis of challenges and opportunities for communication in the region, and drawing on experiences that have emerged from IFAD-sponsored rural communication activities in the region.

Rural poverty portal

77. IFAD is building the rural poverty portal (www.ruralpovertyportal.org), which will enhance information and knowledge-sharing by positioning the fight to eradicate rural poverty as a global priority. The portal is an Internet-based tool and service that connects communities of people with the information and knowledge they need to eradicate rural poverty.

VII. International Telecommunication Union

The changing telecommunications environment

78. The 2005 Millennium Summit recognizes the role of science and technology, including ICTs in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

79. The growth of ICTs will open new opportunities in communication for development. The impact of the mobile phone has led to measurable economic development in developing countries.

80. The number of Internet users continues to grow, reaching around 842 million worldwide at the end of 2004, compared with 605 million at the end of 2002. Broadband access technologies are extending access and advanced wireless broadband technologies offer great promise to enable developing countries to achieve greater Internet penetration and information access.

World Summit on the Information Society

81. ITU was the lead organizing United Nations system agency for both phases of the World Summit. Through the World Summit, ITU provided leadership within the United Nations system on ICT matters and for implementation of the Summit outcomes.

82. Paragraph 64 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles[1] specifically states that the core competencies of ITU are of crucial importance in building the Information Society.

83. The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society[7] reiterates the important role played by ITU, and designates ITU as the sole facilitator/moderator for 2 of a total of 11 action lines (C2, on infrastructure, and C5, on security), and joint moderator for an additional 6 action lines.

84. On 27 March 2006, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/252, in which it endorsed the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, among other decisions and actions.

85. ITU maintains a database of stocktaking of World Summit-related activities undertaken by stakeholders, as well as contributing its own activities to the stocktaking database. A "Golden Book" of stakeholder commitments and initiatives and a web portal of ICT Success Stories have been published.

United Nations system initiatives on information and communication technologies

86. Along with UNESCO and UNDP, ITU is playing a lead role in the multi-stakeholder implementation of the World Summit Plan of Action, and will serve as rotating chair of the United Nations Group on the Information Society established by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination at its spring 2006 meeting.

87. ITU will also play the lead facilitation role for the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit under action line C2 (infrastructure).

Facilitating cooperative participation to bridge the international digital divide

88. The ICT application projects of ITU delivering services to developing countries in sectors such as health, education, internet, commerce, agriculture and government services have benefited more than 100 developing countries. Some 60 partnership agreements have been signed and implemented by ITU with regional and international organizations and in cooperation with Governments and the private sector.

89. Most ITU activities focused on specific country or multi-country requests for assistance on a wide range of topics from strengthening regulatory agencies to assistance in telecommunication policy and competition law and technical assistance in network engineering, spectrum management and digital technology deployment, distance-learning, telemedicine.

90. The ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau has established partnership agreements to create tools and training material and guidelines for the development of capabilities in the field of telecommunications science and technology in developing countries, with organizations, companies and other United Nations system agencies such as UNESCO, UNEP, the United Nations Institute for Training

[7] See A/60/687, annex.

and Research, the European Community, the European Space Agency and the World Health Organization.

91. There are a number of ongoing projects in e-government, e-learning, e-security and shared access to ICTs in various countries, including a joint project between ITU, UPU and other partners to bring the benefits of digital technology to the population in rural and remote areas using post offices as vehicles.

Disseminate information and know-how to assist developing countries

92. In direct response to the Geneva Plan of Action of the World Summit, in a cooperative effort ITU has launched the Digital Opportunity Index to measure countries' progress and prospects in building an information society.

93. Human resource management and development activities in developing countries strengthen human, institutional and organizational capacity. These activities particularly target the needs of policymakers and regulators at the government level as well as senior executives and managers of telecom/ICT operators and service providers trained through different online and face-to-face programmes through centres of excellence.

94. Gender and youth programmes have initiated activities with the purpose of disseminating information and providing training. An innovative initiative included assistance to the Centre of Young Software Developers in Uzbekistan.

VIII. United Nations Development Programme

95. Since the convening of the ninth Round Table, UNDP has restructured its Communications Office and has integrated communications for development as one of its key services to programme countries. UNDP seeks to strengthen communications as a tool for development, providing strategic communications services for programme delivery, training and support for the media and for communications professionals, and information services for the public.

96. The involvement of UNDP in communication for development takes on many different forms, including the design and dissemination of communication tools for development practitioners, the mobilization of artists, celebrities and other communicators for achieving development goals, public information and civic education campaigns in electoral processes, training of journalists, broadening access to communications technologies and using these technologies to facilitate development, and enhancing the dynamic process of participatory development.

Participatory development and voter education

97. The UNDP Civil Society Organizations Division, with the Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Programme (a trust fund with World Bank and UNEP) and the Human Rights Strengthening Programme (a joint programme with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), in 2004 commissioned *Insights into Participatory Video: a handbook for the field*.

The handbook, published in February 2006, gives practical advice on key games and activities, editing footage, technical advice, and equipment requirements, and provides examples from Ghana, India and Turkmenistan.

98. UNDP worked with the Liberian National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems to train community-based voter educators from civil society organizations and contracted local organizations for an intensive voter education programme. The UNDP Country Office and Communications Office collaborate in election reporting workshops for Liberian journalists.

99. UNDP also worked with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Interim Afghan Electoral Commission in the Voter Registration Project and the Afghan Elections Project. Voter registration was promoted and facilitated through public information and civic education campaigns, using face-to-face approaches, broadcast media, community mobilization events, and civil society partnerships.

HIV/AIDS: Breaking the Silence

100. The first-ever UNDP programme for the Arab States on HIV/AIDS was launched in September 2002 with the aim of "breaking the silence" by raising awareness and engaging Arab leaders from different sectors of society. UNDP collaborated with non-governmental organizations, Governments, and agencies including UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Labour Organization and OHCHR.

101. Activities included a discussion seminar for university students in the Syrian Arab Republic and a historic workshop with leading Egyptian religious figures in collaboration with UNAIDS and national organizations. In 2004, an 18-minute documentary with personal testimonies by people living with HIV/AIDS and exclusive interviews with prominent individuals in Arab society was widely broadcast on television networks, with CD-ROMs and videos distributed to target audiences.

102. Under the title "Africa 2015", UNDP partnered with UNAIDS and UNICEF and involved celebrities and political leaders to promote HIV/AIDS prevention. UNDP organized consultations with African artists, who performed and released the song *We are the Drums* on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in 2004. Nine individual songs have since been produced in an album.

Media training

103. In May 2006, the Media Forum in Kigali was organized, alongside the Sixth African Governance Forum, for journalists to discuss media participation for better governance. In June 2005, the UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region organized regional media training and knowledge management workshops on gender and citizenship.

104. The Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature project conducted a seminar for journalists in March 2006 on the legislature and importance of public participation.

105. In February 2006, UNDP established a Media Centre to support the General Elections Commission in Indonesia.

106. The UNDP Small Arms Control Programme hosted a media-training workshop in Liberia in December 2005, to promote awareness and sensitization on the negative impact of small arms proliferation.

Governance: fighting corruption

107. UNDP is undertaking the training of national journalists in reporting on governance and corruption issues and the drafting of anti-corruption legislation in Asia.

108. The Regional Governance Programme has produced two television public service announcements conveying how corruption affects everyone and takes away important services at the community level, and warning against petty corruption. The aim is to voiceover and broadcast the announcements on as many national stations as possible.

Influencing policy at the global, regional and national levels

109. The national report in 2004, entitled "Interculturalism and Globalization: Bolivia's Potential", prompted a vigorous media debate and was used to formulate the Government national information and communication strategy.

Communications technologies to facilitate development

110. UNDP has emphasized the critical role that ICT can play in development. Recent projects include a pilot programme of e-government in Kenya, with communities in eight different districts gaining access to government information and other strategic resources; and in India "eJustice", a portal offering legal information and support, in collaboration with the Centre for Good Governance and the National Institute for Smart Governance.

111. UNDP participated in global forums, including the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and the World Summit on the Information Society.

IX. United Nations Population Fund

112. Since its inception, UNFPA has used communication as a critical strategy and tool in its programming process to improve quality of life through broadened informed choices of individuals, couples, families, and communities.

113. In accordance with the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals, UNFPA ensures the success of its communication efforts to advance public knowledge, understanding, and commitment to child spacing, population, and reproductive health by influencing and promoting policies and dialogue.

114. In recent years UNFPA made a paradigm shift in communication activities, from information provision and education style of activities, including broad awareness-raising campaigns, to more focused communication activities that work towards influencing attitudes and changing behaviour.

115. Communication is an integral component of UNFPA programmes and makes use of mass media, interpersonal communication, folk and other types of popular media.

116. Efforts emphasize the use of modern information and communication technologies such as the Internet, mobile phones and other audio-video technologies to create awareness and to promote population and reproductive health issues.

117. More targeted communication interventions have given people greater insight into their personal situations and strengthened knowledge and skills sharing for sustained behaviour and practices.

118. Communication of appropriate information, counselling, and to promote safe, healthy and responsible behaviours has contributed immensely in improving maternal and child health and the prevention of HIV and AIDS.

119. Communication is key for access and appropriate utilization of health services that have been established to improve reproductive health.

Capacity-building

120. UNFPA has utilized existing national, regional and international technical resources to build communication competencies at national levels.

121. Advocacy and behavioural change communication training have been provided to local reproductive health personnel and community members, particularly women.

122. Training has been provided in the development of strategies and techniques. Communication training has been integrated in the curricula of schools of public health and medicine, social worker training schools, schools of communication and journalism, and teacher training institutions.

123. National population communication networks are being strengthened, especially for journalists and health educators.

Research

124. UNFPA encourages the collection of baseline data for assessing the need for specific communication interventions and their impact, which includes analyses of communication and media audiences; socio-cultural research for the development of culturally sensitive programmes and strategies, and evaluation of such interventions.

Support to campaigns, communication materials production, and equipment

125. Mass media campaigns and the production and distribution of audio-visual, electronic, and print materials are prepared for selected audiences.

126. Support is provided to non-governmental, youth, and women's organizations, to produce informative, entertaining, educational and promotional materials.

127. UNFPA provides assistance for the design and development of training materials and equipment, low-cost, folk, and mass media materials, and the expertise needed to produce them.

128. UNFPA supports the planning and implementation of mass media campaigns, linkages to community media broadcasting, participatory community mobilization activities such as street theatre, and innovative use of new communication and information technologies such as telephone hotlines, and Internet-based services.

National comprehensive communication strategies

129. UNFPA encourages and supports the development of comprehensive, country-specific national advocacy and behavioural change communication strategies that promote individual choice in the area of sexual and reproductive health. These strategies provide a framework for all inputs and are important for harmonizing national and donor efforts in behavioural change communication, including the framework of United Nations common programming processes.

X. United Nations Environment Programme

130. The UNEP working motto, or slogan is "environment for development" and many of its operational programmes and activities have been reoriented in line with this aim.

131. The Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 7, entitled "Ensure Environmental Sustainability", as well as the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, other agreements, decisions and resolutions give UNEP the mandate to pursue an approach that can encompass opportunities in the area of communication for development.

132. UNEP was identified by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board High Level Committee on Programmes as a member to the World Summit "e-environment" follow-up plan of action.

Capacity-building for the media

133. As one example of UNEP efforts to build the capacity of media on environmental issues, a thematic workshop focusing on the links between poverty and environment was held in early 2006 for members of the African Network of Environmental Journalists, and hosted by the Government of Mauritania.

Raising environmental awareness

134. *Poverty and Environment Times* is a publication of UNEP collaborating centre GRID-Arendal (Global Research Information Database, Arendal, Norway) that aims to raise awareness on links between poverty and environment in an easy-to-read package. Four editions have been published so far, the latest focusing on the importance of the environment for the Millennium Development Goals. That edition was launched at the World Summit 2005. UNEP also published special editions of its flagship *Our Planet* magazine for the World Summit, as well as targeted publications to children and youth as part of its TUNZA Youth strategy. The UNEP website is increasingly being improved to raise awareness and understanding on environment and development issues.

World Congress on Communication for Development

135. UNEP is represented in the Advisory Board of the World Congress on Communication for Development.

World Environment Day and other United Nations observances

136. In addition to the activities each year around the globe on World Environment Day on 5 June, The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October) was observed by UNEP for the first time in 2005. The UNEP Poverty and Environment Unit is approaching UNDP to discuss potential for joint observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

eCARE: a practical case study working with partners

137. With funding from the United Nations Foundation, UNEP launched e-Commerce and Renewable Energy (eCARE) in December 2005, as a 3-year initiative in partnership with Telecom Management Partner, a subsidiary of Telenor. eCARE seeks to deliver commercial and social services using ICTs and clean energy systems in rural communities of Ghana through an enterprise-centred approach. The project establishes rural business centres, each equipped with three phones, a computer and printer, and a solar system for eCARE power. Entrepreneurs are selected from rural areas, taken through training, and make a down payment on a rural business centre which they operate. When the loan is repaid, the entrepreneur becomes the owner of the equipment. eCARE will establish over 200 rural business centres over three years all over Ghana.

138. Today six eCARE centres are in successful operation in Ghana. By the close of March 2006, a total of 25 eCARE centres will be in operation, benefiting more than 150,000 people. Rural to peri-urban residents will then have access to affordable telecommunication services in areas where this was previously lacking. eCARE is bridging not only the "energy divide" but also the "digital divide". By the end of 2008 eCARE will cover all regions of Ghana with at least 200 centres offering renewably powered telecom services to more than 1 million Ghanaians.

XI. United Nations Children's Fund

139. In 2005, a significant part of UNICEF communications activities focused on reaching the general public and civil society with advocacy messages about the Millennium Development Goals and the ways in which achieving results for children advanced a country's efforts towards achieving the Goals.

140. UNICEF used the World Wide Web, multimedia publications, media coverage and celebrity ambassadors to reach a broader and more diverse audience, thereby engaging a wide range of partners in development, some for the first time.

141. In its programme communications, UNICEF supports development goals by presenting results-oriented messages, grounded in research and developed within environmental contexts. There is a strong emphasis on processes including monitoring, evaluation and documentation. Underlying all its interventions, UNICEF strongly advocates for the human rights perspective that focuses on inclusion and agency self-reliance. Ranging from policy advocacy to mass communication and social mobilization, UNICEF programme communication focuses on influencing attitudes and behaviours to contribute to positive social change. Areas where UNICEF has been working intensively over the past two years have included polio and malaria eradication, routine immunization and more recently, avian influenza.

142. The use of new and traditional media by UNICEF contributes to a highly effective advocacy effort ensuring large scale information outreach about the situation of children around the world in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

143. High-visibility initiatives to achieve youth participation and enable their voice has been marked by activities around the International Children's Day of Broadcasting and the related award given in partnership with the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

144. UNICEF produces essential data and information which are required for strategic action in communication for development. Flagship publications such as *The State of the World's Children* report and *Progress for Children* provide detailed analysis concerning the plight of children worldwide and the actions required internationally to improve their situation. Additional reports include *Gender Achievements and Progress in Education* and several on HIV and AIDS, including *Children: The missing face of AIDS*, *Girls, HIV/AIDS and Education* and *Monitoring and evaluation of the national response to children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS*.

145. Advocacy campaigns are supported with publications on child survival including *Vaccines: Handled with Care*; *Building Trust in Immunization*; *Eliminating Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus*; and *Immunization Summary 2005*. Multimedia *Child Alert* products are also being introduced to highlight the situation of children in chronic and "silent" emergencies, with the first two reports focusing on Darfur and Haiti, respectively.

146. Strategic partnerships are established, including with media organizations, to promote issues related to the Millennium Development Goals.

147. In response to emergencies, strategic messaging has been strengthened through innovative applications such as the global correspondent system, a digital and web-based news distributor that ensures the delivery of multimedia content in record time.

148. UNICEF has met success in utilizing new information technologies including the Really Simple Syndication news feed and converged radio and podcasts to provide broadcast-downloadable programmes through its website. *The News Market* reaches more than 6,000 broadcasters globally and has increased its digital distribution by more than 250 per cent from 2004, with an annual total of 559,000 clips downloaded in 2005, compared to 158,000 in 2004. More than 700 audio-video products, a dozen Flash interactives and thousands of news pages are produced every year on the UNICEF website.

XII. Conclusions and recommendations[1]

149. Communication for development is about people, who are the drivers of their own development. It is a two-way process — with people coming together to identify problems, agree on visions for desirable futures, create solutions and empower the poorest. Communication for development is an approach of equal importance to all stakeholders. It is about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge and as such respects indigenous knowledge and culture. The local context is key. Within that perspective, it is clear that communication for development is critical to the success of the Millennium Development Goals.

150. In the recent past, communication for development has faced a number of key challenges: (a) a new and rapidly changing environment owing to the challenges of globalization, privatization, ecological pressure, the decentralization of services, the explosion of media and the emergence of new social actors; (b) the rapid expansion of ICTs, but the continuing gap between knowledge and information, and limited participation of the poorest in the development process; (c) finding how communication fits into local and national development processes and policies; and (d) how to demonstrate the added value and impact of communication for development and including these in government, international and donor policies. All of the above have brought new opportunities but have also led to a marginalization of poverty-related issues. In order to counter this, collaboration and coordination among communication for development initiatives is a priority.

151. **The ninth Round Table called for: (a) scaling up successful examples of communication for development initiatives to improve practice and policy at every level; (b) policies and resources to be properly enabled by concerted actions, and adequate resources, both human and material giving consideration to longer timescales; (c) implementation of national legal frameworks favouring the right to free expression, emergence of free and pluralistic information systems, and recognizing the role of community media in providing access to communication for the isolated and marginalized; (d) research addressing sustained process and outcome using a participatory approach, a shared framework between development agencies, local stakeholders, and communities**

[1] Conclusions and recommendations are based on the outcome of the ninth Round Table and its Declaration.

in project design and implementation; (e) participatory baseline and communication needs assessments that include self-evaluation by communities themselves to feed back at the policy level; (f) training initiatives focused on collaborative learning, encouraging experiential, value-based, culturally sensitive training in participatory communication for development and fostering a community of practice across the regions; (g) building alliances and effective linkages for a voice to the poorest and with the ability to engage and influence policy and decision-making on sustainable development, and to that end, fostering local, national and regional communication for development processes; (h) information and consultation mechanisms set up to ensure coordinated action among United Nations system agencies and other stakeholders at the international level.

152. The ninth Round Table also proposed general recommendations, namely that: (a) communication for development advocates and practitioners should commit to ensure that communications is recognized as a central component in all development initiatives; (b) donors and development agencies should set up well-resourced communication for development units to implement and promote initiatives; (c) Governments, donors and development agencies should incorporate communication needs assessment in any development initiative (and eventually devote a specific percentage of the budget for this purpose (e.g., 0.5-1 per cent); (d) initiatives such as the World Congress on Communication for Development are encouraged to build a concrete evidence base for decision-makers in donor, development and governments agencies; (e) the United Nations should analyse communication experiences, suggest improvements and develop a common approach to communication for development; and (f) training initiatives should be fostered in developing countries building on existing experiences; programmes, materials and systems should be developed and shared; and participatory development communication should be integrated into existing development curricula.